



CITY OF GLENDALE CALIFORNIA REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL AND HOUSING AUTHORITY

December 11, 2012

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Small Lot Subdivision Initiation

1. That the City Council direct staff to prepare options for implementing a small lot subdivision ordinance.

COUNCIL ACTION

Public Hearing <input type="checkbox"/>	Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/>	Consent Calendar <input type="checkbox"/>	Action Item <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Report Only <input type="checkbox"/>
Approved for <u>Dec. 11, 2012</u> calendar				

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Submitted

Hassan Haghani, AICP, Director of Community Development...

Signature

Prepared

Tim Foy, AICP, Deputy Director Planning & Neighborhood Svc.

Laura Stotler, AICP, Principal Planner

Alan Loomis, Principal Urban Designer

Approved

Scott Ochoa, City Manager

Reviewed

Michael Garcia, City Attorney

RECOMMENDATION

The Community Development Department recommends:

1. That the City Council direct staff to initiate a small lot subdivision ordinance, initiate small lot design guidelines and initiate options for processing small lot subdivisions, including modifications to Glendale development codes.

SUMMARY

This item is presented at the direction of Council in response to a constituent request to allow small lot subdivisions in Glendale. Small lot subdivisions allow for ownership of single units on individual lots in multi-family zones where the lots are smaller than those permitted in single-family neighborhoods, yet the densities are comparable to existing multi-family zoning. Small lot subdivisions create an investment tool for existing multi-family neighborhoods, particularly those which have been downzoned in the past, because they promote infill, increase housing choices and provide opportunities for homeownership affordable to Glendale's workforce. Small lot subdivisions may also offer an opportunity to preserve units with historic character that were constructed under earlier zoning standards. Small lot developments allow for flexibility to deal with a variety of site constraints and urban design is a critical component to the success of any small lot development. Any proposal for a small lot ordinance needs to be accompanied by small lot design guidelines and include a study of broader code changes for implementation, including but not limited to the design review process, the subdivision process, building code, fire code, utility standards, etc... necessary to streamline implementation of a small lot ordinance.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact is anticipated from initiating staff preparation of a small lot subdivision ordinance since staff would develop the program. However, positive fiscal impact is anticipated should a small lot subdivision ordinance be adopted that will encourage development of infill lots in certain multi-family zones.

ANALYSIS

What is a Small Lot Ordinance?

On January 31, 2008, the City of Los Angeles adopted a landmark ordinance known as the "Small Lot Subdivision (Townhome) Ordinance" which, together with Small Lot Design Guidelines, creates a new housing option. (See Exhibits 1 and 2) Los Angeles' Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance permits subdivision of multi-family and limited commercially zoned properties into small single family or townhome style lots by reducing minimum lot size and interior setback requirements, and by eliminating requirements for conventional street frontage and traditional access. The purpose of the Small Lot Ordinance is to enable ownership of fee simple single family homes, accommodating a variety of configurations, as long as each structure, from the foundation to the roof, is separate and independent on its own. Small lot subdivisions provide additional home ownership housing opportunities and increase housing choices within the community.

The most common examples of City of Los Angeles small lot subdivisions near Glendale appear to be multi-family townhome design, although one small lot example favors small single-family bungalows. A small lot example on Maltman Avenue shows the effectiveness for small lot subdivisions for historic preservation of bungalow development. The attached map and descriptions in Exhibit 3 show the variety and flexibility for small lot development in multi-family neighborhoods, similar to those that exist in Glendale. The small lot subdivision ordinance has proven to be an effective tool in Los Angeles and may be similarly effective in Glendale.

Benefits of a Small Lot Ordinance for Glendale

Glendale needs to revive local neighborhood investment in downzoned multi-family zoned

neighborhoods without increasing zoning density. Multi-family downzoning has resulted in multi-family neighborhoods with eclectic densities, setbacks and inconsistent development patterns throughout Glendale. Reduced allowable densities, high land costs, requirements for subterranean parking, and lending restrictions are factors that have limited new residential construction in Glendale's multi-family neighborhoods. This is particularly evident in South Glendale where the lack of investment has led to substandard conditions in some areas, leading to a lower quality of life and an increased need for code enforcement. A small lot ordinance may encourage development of infill lots within these areas, providing neighborhood investment, greater housing choice, and new opportunities for affordable home ownership.

Currently, Glendale offers incentives for lot consolidation in multi-family neighborhoods, thereby giving additional density for multi-family projects which combine lots. However, many individual lots remain throughout multi-family neighborhoods where lot consolidation is not possible for various reasons. While many multi-family zoned properties have the potential to add one or two units, construction finance constraints that favor individual (not common lot) ownership, high construction costs for excavation necessary to construct subterranean parking, and minimal return on investment have made it unattractive for property owners to construct new apartments and condominiums on individual lots.

Small lot subdivision is a tool for creating new investment in multi-family areas, focusing on infill development. While traditional single-family subdivisions are constructed at suburban densities, the basic nature of small lot development is urban and addresses some of the constraints that have hindered new investment in Glendale's multi-family zones. Allowing small lot development permits each unit to be on its own lot, rather than on a shared lot (also known as air-space or condominium subdivisions). Developer financing is easier when each unit is on its own lot because each unit is located on its own real property. Small lot development avoids the need for subterranean construction since each unit can provide its own garage on grade, minimizing physical development costs and environmental impacts to neighbors.

Small lot subdivisions provide the additional benefit of increasing affordable home ownership choices. Traditional single-family homes in Glendale are priced beyond the reach of typical families. Small lot development provides opportunities for homeownership at cost levels affordable to many working in Glendale's employment sectors including hospitals (nurses), schools/colleges (professors and administrators) and entertainment studios. Homeownership is a recognized housing goal in Glendale because of its stabilizing effect upon neighborhoods. A small lot development ordinance would aid in Glendale homeownership goals.

Small Lot subdivisions may provide flexibility for encouraging preservation of historic properties, as seen in the Maltman small lot development in Los Angeles. There are a handful of older bungalow-type multi-family units constructed in the 1930s and 1940s in multi-family areas of Glendale which may be suitable candidates for small lot subdivision. Most, if not all, of these developments are non-conforming in terms of today's densities and parking standards. A small lot subdivision of these properties may create an opportunity for restoration and long-term preservation of these units, enhancing the existing neighborhood.

Glendale's Multi-family Zones

Currently, Glendale codes are a barrier to small lot development. Glendale zoning has no minimum lot size in multi-family zones. However, the subdivision ordinance uses average lot sizes within 500 feet in the same zone as a tool to establish appropriate lot sizes. The Glendale Municipal Code requires lots to front on streets and does not recognize easement access as

sufficient for subdivision purposes. The subdivision ordinance also has requirements for open space, which would need to be modified in the case of small lot subdivision. Should Council decide to initiate a small lot ordinance, amendments would be needed to both the subdivision ordinance and the zoning code to permit small lot developments to occur.

Glendale currently has four multi-family residential zones, R3050, R2250, R1650 and R1250 Zone. The number corresponds to the allowable density for each lot. Thus, the R1250 zone allows a maximum of one residential unit for each 1,250 square feet of lot area. Should the City enact a small lot ordinance, it would be simple to establish flexible options for meeting minimum lot size requirements. Thus, in the R1250 zone, the allowable density is already established by the lot size prior to subdivision; however, the minimum lot size for a small lot would need to be established. Since small lot developments are generally townhouse-style and not stacked-flats, the effective density would actually be less than that currently allowed by zoning. Should a small lot ordinance be adopted, a developer would have a choice of constructing apartments or condominiums at higher actual densities, or choose to subdivide into small lots at lower effective density.

For a small lot ordinance to be effective, the development density needs to be by-right and the approval process clear and predictable. At this time the process for design review and the process for subdivision do not lend themselves to a small lot process. In addition to creating small lot design guidelines, a process would need to be developed whereby design review would occur prior to subdivision by the Planning Commission or City Council. It is recommended that Council direct staff to provide options for processing small lot subdivisions, including identifying municipal code changes necessary to enact a small lot ordinance.

Characteristics of Small Lot Development

Small lot developments tend to resemble small single-family home and townhouse development or "low houses". Most people miss the fact that each unit is separate and distinct, although there may be non-structural joining materials or plates that provide for continuity between the structures. An example of such plates can be seen in the Glendale Fashion Center near Glendale Avenue and Wilson Avenue where there are plates in front of Ross, Famous Footware and Cost Plus that show where the various buildings are separated and delineate property lines.

Small lot developments are constructed at urban densities, so they are appropriate for transit oriented districts. Presently the City is conducting a study of transit-oriented development around the Glendale Metrolink Station, funded by a Metro grant. Small lot development may be a way to increase investment and new units in proximity to transit corridors and the Glendale Metrolink Station. Each small lot residence would have parking for two cars, similar to that for a single-family home, although parking flexibility is recommended to allow tandem parking. However, small lot development near transit may include incentives such as reduced parking requirements to encourage transit use and to increase affordability.

Small lot development also has no common open space. As with typical single-family lots, there would be no common open space because lots are individually owned. Common areas may exist, such as driveways and trash enclosures, but those are handled through easements and covenants, conditions and restrictions (CCRs). A hallmark of small lot development is flexibility to deal with individual site constraints and assets necessary for accommodating infill development. Creating a small lot ordinance would involve amending a variety of municipal code requirements. Exhibit 4 is a draft outlining the start of some of the amendments that would necessary to create and implement a small lot subdivision ordinance.

Members of the development community in Glendale have indicated an interest in small lot subdivisions for Glendale which is why Council directed staff to look into this issue. As identified above, a small lot ordinance has the potential to fill a development niche that is lacking in Glendale, namely infill development in downzoned multi-family neighborhoods. It is recommended that Council direct staff to return with a small lot ordinance, design guidelines and other entitlements necessary to implement a small lot ordinance. Should Council give such direction, other minor Subdivision Ordinance amendments to adjust condominium parking requirements to match the zoning code could occur at the same time.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This direction for planning studies is not subject to environmental review.

EXHIBITS

1. City of Los Angeles Small Lot Ordinance
2. City of Los Angeles Small Lot Design Guidelines
3. Map and List of Sample Small Lot Developments
4. Attachment of Draft Municipal Code Changes for Small Lot Development

M O T I O N

Moved by Council Member _____,
seconded by Council Member _____, that the
Council hereby directs staff to initiate a small lot subdivision ordinance, small lot design
guidelines, and options for processing small lot subdivisions, including modifications to
Glendale development codes.


Vote as follows:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

APPROVED AS TO FORM


City Attorney
DATE 12/6/13

ORDINANCE NO. 176354

An ordinance amending Sections 12.03, 12.09, 12.12.1, 12.21 and 12.22 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code to permit detached for-sale small lot subdivisions in commercial and multifamily residential zones.

**THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:**

Section 1. Section 12.03 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is amended by revising the definition of "lot" to read:

LOT. A parcel of land occupied or to be occupied by a use, building or unit group of buildings and accessory buildings and uses, together with the yards, open spaces, lot width and lot area as are required by this chapter and fronting for a distance of at least 20 feet upon a street as defined here, or upon a private street as defined in Article 8 of this chapter. The width of an access-strip portion of a lot shall not be less than 20 feet at any point. In a residential planned development or an approved small lot subdivision a lot need have only the street frontage or access as is provided on the recorded subdivision tract or parcel map for the development.

Sec. 2. Subdivision 3 of Subsection A of Section 12.09 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is amended to read:

3. Apartment houses, boarding or rooming houses, dwelling units in a small lot subdivision, or multiple dwellings on lots having a side lot line adjoining a lot in a commercial or industrial zone, provided that:

(a) The use, including the accessory buildings and uses and required yards, does not extend more than 65 feet from the boundary of the less restrictive zone which it adjoins; and

(b) The lot area per dwelling unit or guest room regulations of the RD1.5 zone shall apply to these uses.

Sec. 3. Subsection A of Section 12.12.1 is amended by adding a new subdivision 8 to read.

8. Dwelling unit or units constructed on a lot in a small lot subdivision and approved by the Advisory Agency, pursuant to Article 7 of this Chapter in conformity with the provision of 12.22 C 27 of this Code.

Sec. 4. The first paragraph of Paragraph (a) of Subdivision 4 of Subsection A of Section 12.21 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is amended to read:

(a) For Dwelling Units. In all zones, there shall be at least two automobile parking spaces on the same lot with each one-family dwelling thereon, and in any RW Zone there shall be at least two automobile parking spaces per dwelling unit which shall be upon the same lot with the dwelling unit. However, for small lot subdivisions approved pursuant to Article 7 of this Chapter in conformity with the provisions of Section 12.22 C 27 of this Code, the required parking spaces shall not be required to be located on the same lot with each dwelling unit, but shall be provided within the boundaries of the parcel or tract map. The ratio of parking spaces required for all other dwelling units shall be at least one parking space for each dwelling unit of less than three habitable rooms, one and one-half parking spaces for each dwelling unit of three habitable rooms, and two parking spaces for each dwelling unit of more than three habitable rooms. Where the lot is located in an RA, RE, RS, R1, RU, RZ, RMP, or RW Zone, the required parking spaces shall be provided within a private garage. Where the lot is located in an R2 Zone, at least one of the required parking spaces per dwelling unit shall be provided within a private garage. Any door or doors installed at the automobile entry to a garage serving a one or two-family dwelling where one or more required parking spaces is located shall be of conventional design constructed so as to permit the simultaneous entry of automobiles into each required parking space without damaging the door or door frame and constructed so as to permit the flow of air through the automobile entry when the door is in the fully closed position.

Sec. 5. Paragraph (h) of Subdivision 5 of Subsection A of Section 12.21 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is amended by adding a new subparagraph numbered (4) to read:

(4) In a private garage or parking area serving an approved small lot subdivision, where the tandem parking is not more than two cars in depth, and provided that at least one parking stall per dwelling unit and all of the parking stalls required for any guest rooms are individually and easily accessible..

Sec. 6. Subsection C of Section 12.22 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is amended by adding a new subdivision 27 to read:

27. Small Lot Subdivision in the R2, RD, R3, R4, R5, RAS and the P and C zones pursuant to an approved subdivision tract or parcel map.

Notwithstanding any provisions of this Code relating to minimum lot area to the contrary, in the R2, RD, R3, R4, R5, RAS and the P and C zones, parcels of land may be subdivided into lots which may contain one, two or three dwelling units, provided that the density of the subdivision complies with the minimum lot area per dwelling unit requirement established for each zone, or in the case of a P zone, the density of the subdivision shall comply with the minimum lot area per dwelling unit of the least restrictive abutting commercial or multi-family residential zone(s).

(a) A parcel map or tract map, pursuant to Section 17.00 *et seq.* of this Code shall be required for the creation of a small lot subdivision.

(b) The minimum lot width shall be 16 feet and the minimum lot area shall be 600 square feet. The Advisory Agency shall designate the location of front yards in the subdivision tract or parcel map approval.

(c) Vehicular access may be provided to either a lot containing a dwelling unit or to its required parking spaces by way of street or alley frontage, driveway access or similar access to a street.

(d) All structures on a lot which includes one or more dwelling units, may, taken together, occupy no more than 80% of the lot area, unless the tract or parcel map provides common open space equivalent to 20% of the lot area of each lot not meeting this provision.

(e) No front, side, or rear yard shall be required between lots within an approved small lot subdivision. However, a five-foot setback shall be provided where a lot abuts a lot that is not created pursuant to this subdivision.

(f) No passageway pursuant to Section 12.21 C 2 of this Code shall be required.

(g) In a P zone, lots may be developed as a small lot subdivision, provided that the General Plan land use designation of the lot is "commercial" or "multiple family residential."

(h) In an R2 zone, a lot may be developed as a small lot subdivision provided that the lot meets the requirements of Section 12.09 A 3 of the Code.

(i) A dwelling unit in a small lot subdivision shall not be required to comply with Paragraphs (a), (b), (f) and (g) of Section 12.21 A 17 of this Code.


(j) Fences and walls within five feet of the front lot line shall be no more than three and one-half feet in height. Fences and walls within five feet of the side and rear lot lines shall be no more than six feet in height.

(105208)

Sec. 7. The City Clerk shall certify to the passage of this ordinance and have it published in accordance with Council policy, either in a daily newspaper circulated in the City of Los Angeles or by posting for ten days in three public places in the City of Los Angeles: one copy on the bulletin board located in the Main Street lobby to the City Hall; one copy on the bulletin board located at the ground level at the Los Angeles Street entrance to the Los Angeles Police Department; and one copy on the bulletin board located at the Temple Street entrance to the Los Angeles County Hall of Records.

I hereby certify that this ordinance was passed by the Council of the City of Los Angeles, at its meeting of DEC 14 2004.

FRANK T. MARTINEZ, City Clerk

By  Deputy

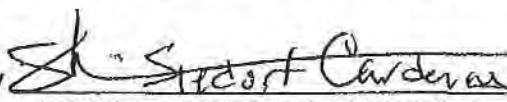
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Approved _____

 Mayor

Approved as to Form and Legality

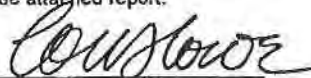
Rockard J. Delgadillo, City Attorney

By  88H
SHARON SIEDORF CARDENAS
Assistant City Attorney

Pursuant to Charter Section 559, I approve
this ordinance on behalf of the City
Planning Commission and recommend
it be adopted

December 3, 2004

see attached report.


CON HOWE
Director of Planning

Date DEC 03 2004

File No. CF 04-1546; CPC 2004-3334-CA

DECLARATION OF POSTING ORDINANCE

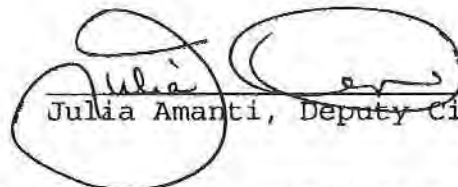
I, JULIA AMANTI, state as follows: I am, and was at all times hereinafter mentioned, a resident of the State of California, over the age of eighteen years, and a Deputy City Clerk of the City of Los Angeles, California.

Ordinance No. 176354 - Amending Sections 12.03, 12.09, 12.12.1, 12.21 and 12.22 of the L.A.M.C. re: To Permit Detached For-Sale Lot Subdivisions in Commercial & Multifamily Residential Zones - a copy of which is hereto attached, was finally adopted by the Los Angeles City Council on Dec. 14, 2004, and under the direction of said City Council and the City Clerk, pursuant to Section 251 of the Charter of the City of Los Angeles and Ordinance No. 172959, on Dec. 22, 2004, I posted a true copy of said ordinance at each of three public places located in the City of Los Angeles, California, as follows: 1) One copy on the bulletin board at the Main Street entrance to Los Angeles City Hall; 2) one copy on the bulletin board at the ground level Los Angeles Street entrance to the Los Angeles Police Department; and 3) one copy on the bulletin board at the Temple Street entrance to the Hall of Records of the County of Los Angeles.

Copies of said ordinance were posted conspicuously beginning on Dec. 22, 2004 and will be continuously posted for ten or more days.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signed this 22nd day of Dec. 2004 at Los Angeles, California.



Julia Amanti, Deputy City Clerk

Ordinance Effective Date: Jan. 31, 2005

Council File No. 04-1546



CITY OF LOS ANGELES
SMALL LOT DESIGN
GUIDELINES

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1 | INTRODUCTION

THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES has enacted the Small Lot Ordinance (No. 17354) to allow the construction of fee-simple, infill housing on small lots in multi-family zones. The housing can take the form of single-family homes, duplexes, or triplexes. Small lot developments can offer a space-efficient and economically attractive alternative to the traditional condominium development.

Additionally, the ordinance offers a welcomed smart-growth alternative to the suburban single-family home. However, it brings a new set of spatial complexities. Lots may be both small and awkwardly shaped. Driveways and parking can take up much of an already limited lot size. Adjacent structures and neighborhood context may effectively limit building heights above two stories. In short, these spatial constraints and complexities require innovative design solutions.

This handbook provides design guidelines and suggestions both for addressing these complexities, and for ensuring that each small lot development benefits both its residents and the neighborhood.

LOOKING AT SMALL LOT DESIGN FROM THREE LEVELS

Constructing infill housing offers a unique set of design challenges not simply on the parcel level, but also on the neighborhood level and within the public realm. Developers and architects must therefore consider both the design elements of each townhouse and how these designs will enhance the overall neighborhood character and vitality of the street and sidewalk.

PARCEL

Small lot design and layout is fundamentally a site planning challenge. It requires simultaneously addressing practical spatial requirements while creating high-quality living environments. Those practical requirements include: parking and automobile access; small lot sizes and awkward configurations; adequate access to air, light, and ventilation; outdoor space and privacy. Developers must address these issues in ways that ultimately enhance the living environment of each dwelling unit. Additionally, each home must exhibit a high level of design quality: well-articulated entries and facades, proportionate windows, quality building materials, contextual landscaping.



NEIGHBORHOOD

By its very nature, infill development occurs in neighborhoods with preexisting development and preexisting characteristics. In some cases, the neighborhood will be predominantly residential; in others, the neighborhood might be predominantly commercial. Whatever the case, the design should enhance the overall quality of the neighborhood. At this scale, developers and architects must consider not simply the aesthetic nature of each townhouse, but the three-dimensional nature of the entire development: height, massing, siting and orientation. These characteristics must relate to the surrounding built form, respecting the overall neighborhood character and existing topography.



PUBLIC REALM

Each infill project, however small, must add to a vital and coherent public realm—streets and sidewalks that are pleasant, interesting, and comfortable to walk down. To do so, one must consider the three-dimensional relationship between the infill project and the street and sidewalk. Key variables to consider are: building siting and orientation, height and massing; articulation of facades and entryways; placement and type of street trees; landscaping and transitional spaces; and location of driveways and garages.

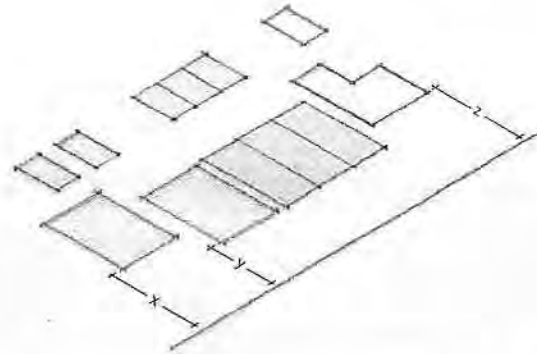
COMPREHENSIVE GOALS:

- Create high-quality indoor and outdoor living environments for all residents
- Design and configure housing to mesh well within the existing neighborhood context
- Enhance the public realm
- Provide fee-simple home ownership opportunities for greater numbers of people, of a range of income levels
- Consolidate service and access areas (parking, driveways, garbage) to minimize their adverse effects on both the public and private realms
- Create high-quality public spaces or common areas (i.e. shared driveways, landscaped areas)

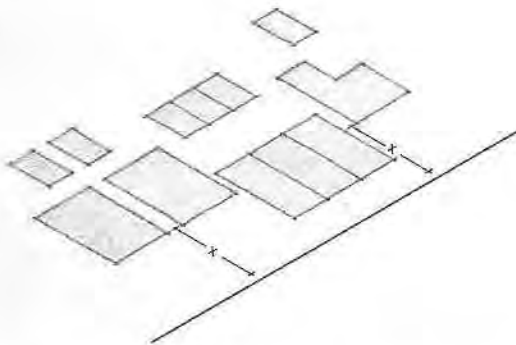
2 | SITE ORGANIZATION AND URBAN FORM

2.1 SETBACKS AND SIDEYARDS

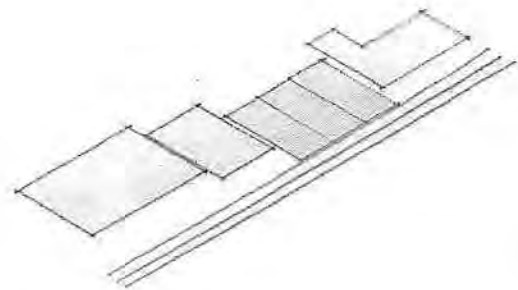
No setbacks are required; however, neighborhood context should provide direction for setting buildings further back from the street. On commercial streets, which have a more urban character, minimal setbacks are appropriate - simply enough room for a small front stoop, and some landscaping to delineate the public and private realms (however, dwellings with ground-floor retail require no setbacks). On residential streets, preexisting setbacks will guide how far a small lot development is set back.



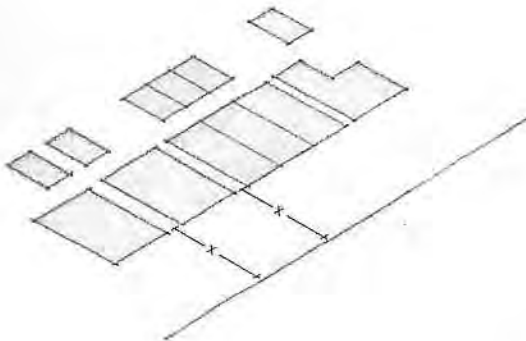
On residential streets with a range of setbacks, align small lot dwellings with the furthest protruding building.



In residential neighborhoods, AVOID configurations that ignore existing setbacks.



On commercial streets with a range of setbacks, small lot developments should nearly abut the sidewalk, allowing some room for an entry, front stoop, and some transitional landscaping. However, dwellings with ground-floor retail do not require such elements.



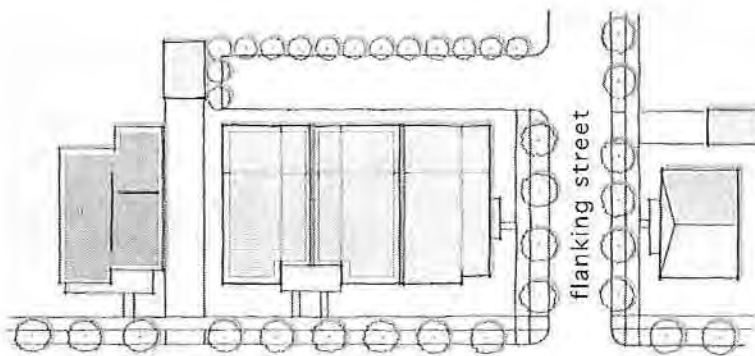
Where a uniform neighborhood setback exists, align the small lot development with this setback. Slight deviations from the setback are acceptable.

SETBACK GUIDELINES

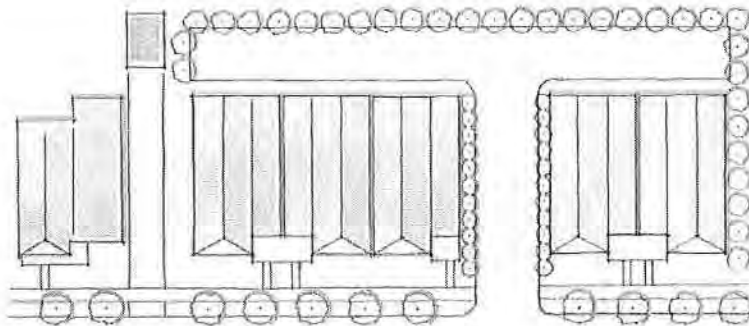
- For both commercial and residential streets, provide space for an entry, front landing, and transitional landscaping between the public sidewalk and the private entryway.
- Match existing setbacks to the extent possible.
- On streets with varying setbacks, align small lot dwellings with the furthest protruding dwelling.

2.2 SITE LAYOUT AND DESIGN

Numerous spatial constraints – parking and driveways, adequate indoor and outdoor living space, and small lot size – require spatially innovative solutions. Builders and designers should ask such questions as: Can I provide outdoor space not only at ground level, but also on balconies and rooftops? Is there an alternate configuration that might take advantage of existing topography to provide more open space? How might adjacent structures and street characteristics affect the development's overall form and orientation? Builders and designers should explore as many spatial avenues as possible, ultimately striking a balance between practical spatial requirements (i.e. parking, adequate interior space) and the provision of amenities (i.e. private outdoor space).

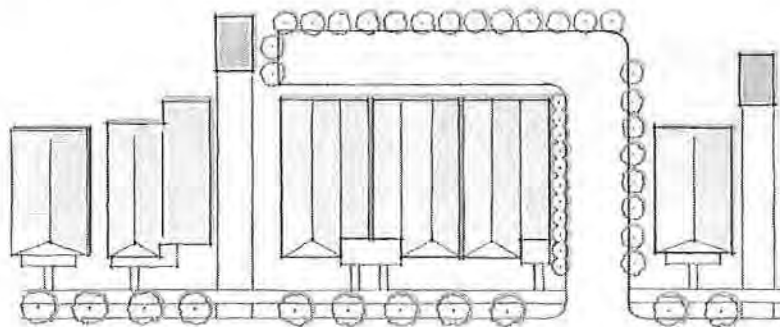


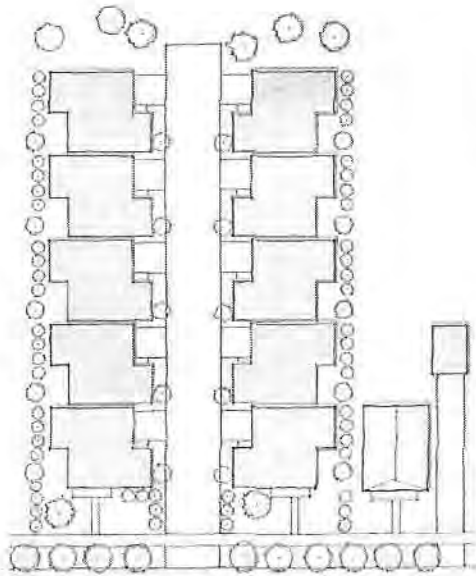
Rear driveway off flanking street



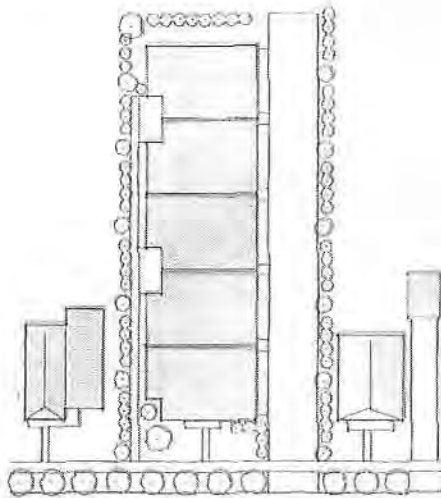
T-driveway off front street

L-driveway off front street



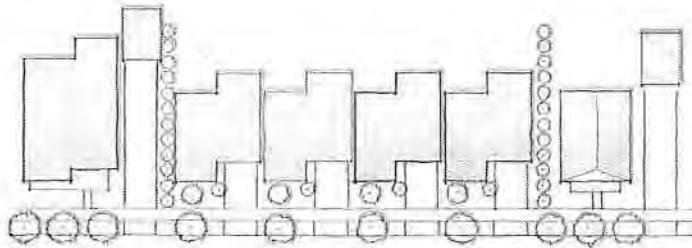


Townhouses with a center access driveway can enhance the public realm when front townhouses are accessible from the sidewalk.



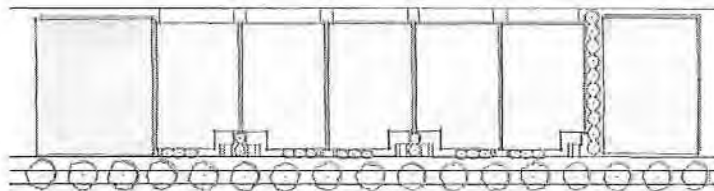
Small lot developments with a side access driveway should configure front townhouses to be accessible from the sidewalk. Interior townhouses should be accessed from both the driveway and a private walkway at the front of the homes.

Configurations should also engage the street, sidewalk and public realm. Streets serve not only as space for vehicular movement, but also as public space for pedestrian activity and casual social interaction. When designed well, small lot developments can enhance the pre-existing character of a good street, or improve a fragmented one. To do so, infill housing should embrace rather than ignore the street.

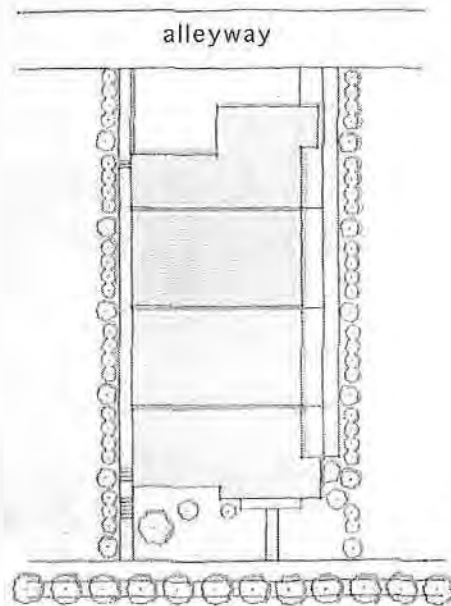


Rowhouses with integral front garages can adequately engage the street if garages are not allowed to dominate the facade. Tandem parking can minimize how much facade space is allocated to parking. One might also consider stacked parking with the aid of lifts.

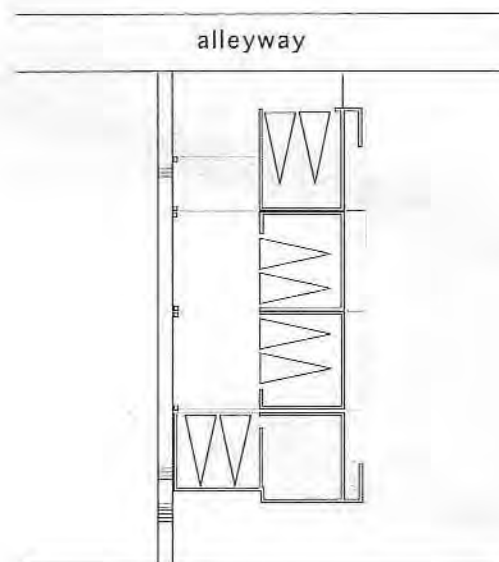
alleyway



Rowhouses on commercial streets with rear alleyway access can eliminate integral front driveways and minimize setbacks to enhance the urban nature of the street.

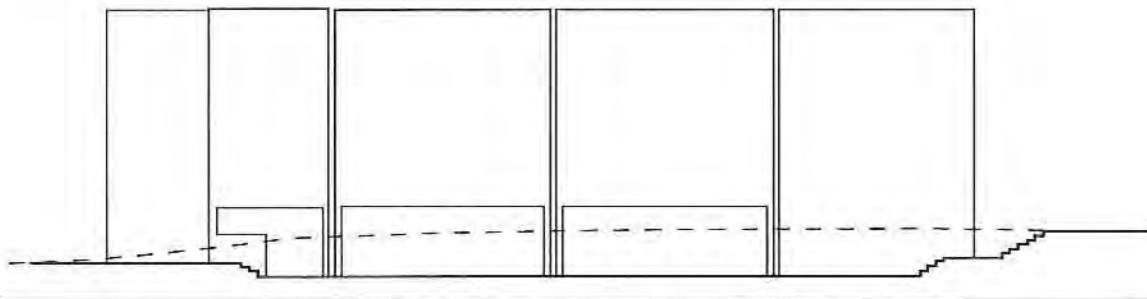


Plan view



Parking-level floor plan

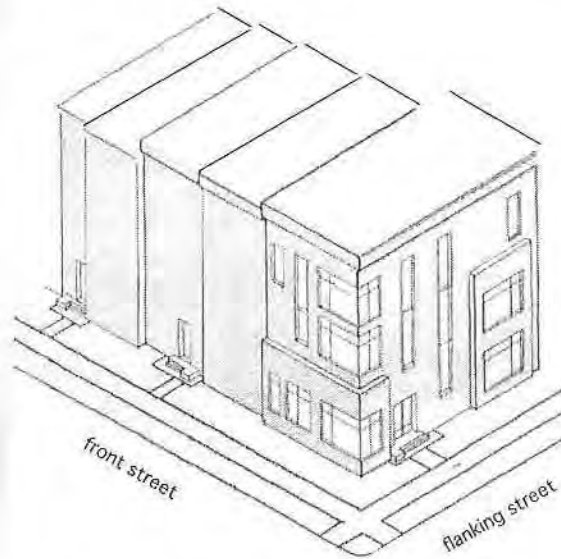
It is possible to locate parking beneath dwellings. In this particular layout, residents access parking from the alleyway and use a community driveway to reach their own parking stall. Notice in the above righthand illustration how the dwellings are still structurally independent.



As shown in this side elevation, the parking is not technically subterranean. The site is excavated so that the buildings sit below the average natural grade (indicated with a dashed line) and can be accessed from the side staircase and walkway as well as from the community driveway.

SITE LAYOUT GUIDELINES:

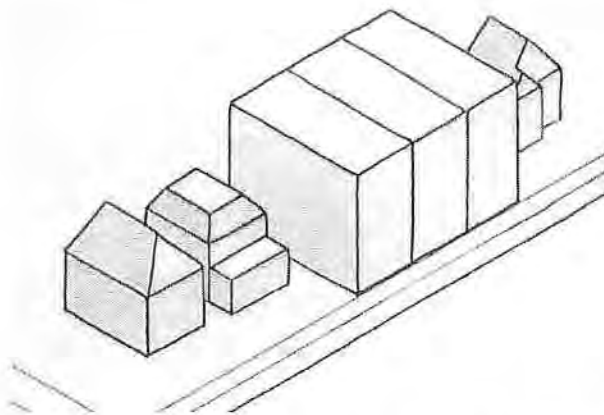
- To the extent possible, configure townhouses to front streets and open spaces, not driveways.
- For townhouses not immediately adjacent to the street, provide a private walkway from the sidewalk to them.
- Minimize the total amount of driveway space and maximize green space.
- Where possible, utilize alleyways for access.
- Take advantage of existing topography and natural features (i.e. existing trees).
- Small lot developments that occupy a corner lot must have the corner townhouse entrance front the flanking street.



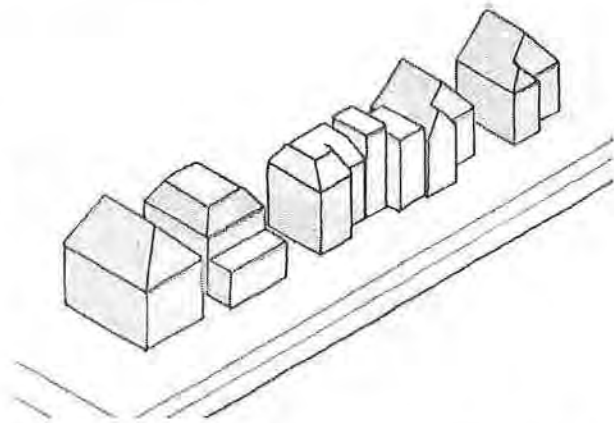
Small lot developments that occupy a corner must have the corner townhouse entrance and main facade front the flanking street.

2.3 HEIGHT AND MASSING

Massing refers to how a building's volume is broken up and articulated. A building envelope is the maximum built volume allowed under the code. Well-designed buildings tend not to max out the building envelope but rather employ volumetric variations (i.e. height, massing, rhythm, texture) to create visual interest. These variations serve dual functions: they help small lot developments mesh with their surroundings, and they enhance the overall quality of the street and public realm by providing visual interest for pedestrians.



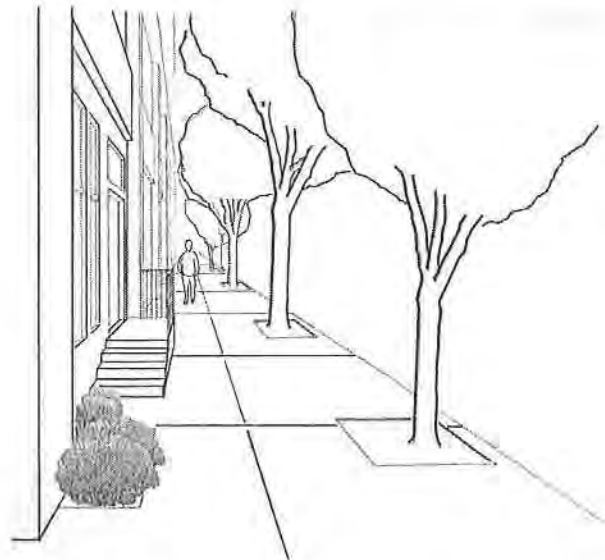
Small-lot developments that max out the building envelope rarely blend well into existing single-family neighborhoods.



Variations in height and massing, borrowing various forms from adjacent structures, can help small-lot developments blend better into the neighborhood.

HEIGHT AND MASSING GUIDELINES

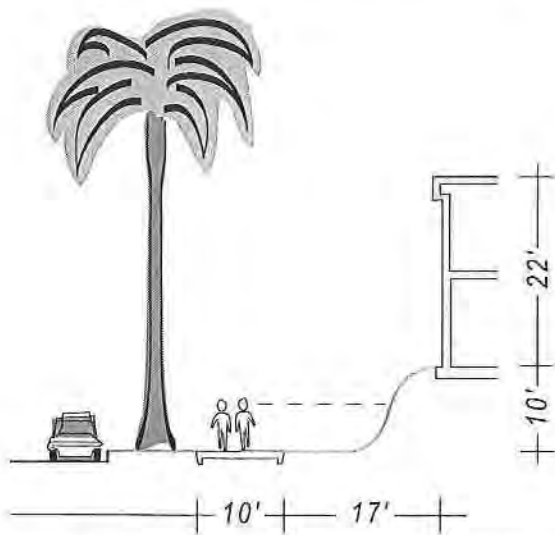
- Use surrounding built context to inform variations in height and massing.
- Avoid excessive differences in height between the new development and adjacent buildings.
- On streets with a more urban character, ensure adequate massing and facade variation at street level.



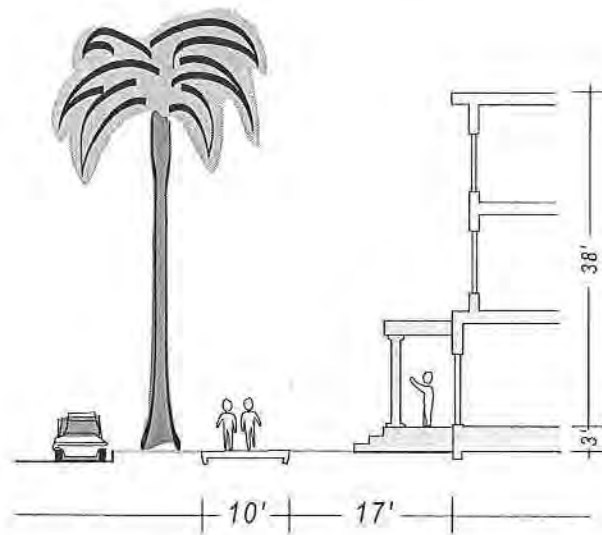
On streets with a more urban character, small-lot developments should still employ variations in massing (particularly at street level) to enhance the pedestrian realm.

2.4 GRADE LEVEL

A common concern of infill townhouses is their excessive height in relation to surrounding structures. Appropriate grade levels consistent with those of surrounding structures can help to offset the potentially negative effects of increased building height. Designers and builders should avoid designs with excessive artificial grading. Resulting buildings ultimately appear taller than what they may be, and their facades tend to tower above the sidewalk, creating an unsightly and inhospitable environment for pedestrians and neighbors. On the other hand, subtle changes in grade can create a key transitional zone between the public and private realms, as well as additional privacy for townhouse inhabitants.



Small lot developments with excessive grading tend to tower above the neighborhood as well as the sidewalk. The healthy interaction between the public and private realms is compromised.



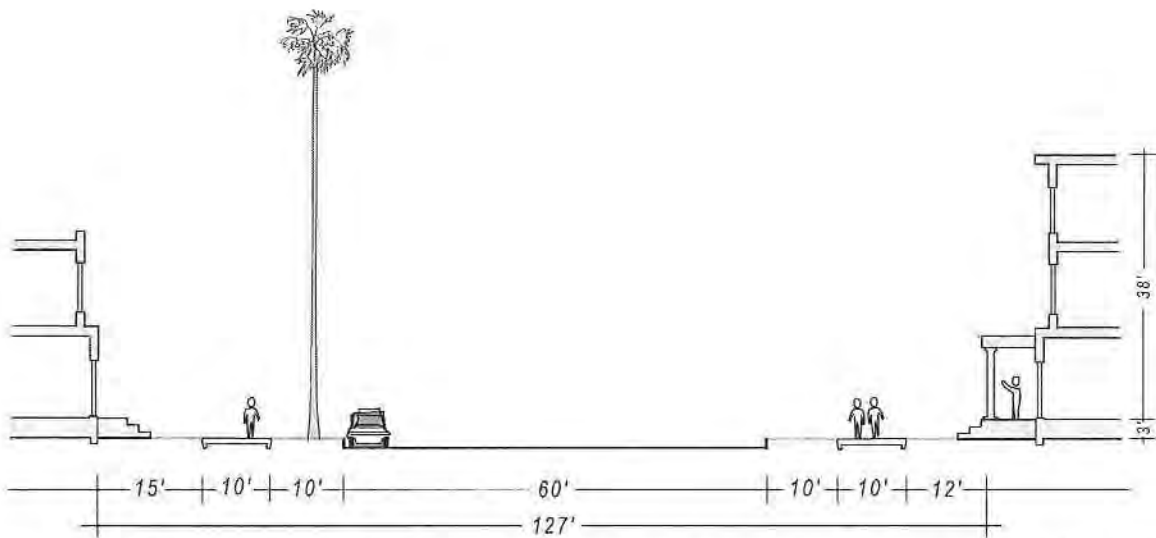
Subtle grade changes (here, three feet) clearly delineate the public and private realms while still maintaining a comfortable relationship between these realms and their users.

GRADE LEVEL GUIDELINES

- Entrances should be three to five steps above grade or consistent with the average grade of existing structures.
- Use "theoretical grade" as opposed to "average natural grade" when siting the development. "Theoretical grade" is defined by "an imaginary line from the midpoint of the parcel on the front property line to the midpoint of the parcel on the rear property line."
- Townhouses whose entrances front commercial boulevards should sit three to five steps above sidewalk level to allow room for a stoop and entryway and ideally some landscaped area. However, live-work or ground-floor commercial arrangements whose work spaces front the boulevard do not require a grade separation.

2.5 BUILDING-TO-STREET PROPORTION

Building-to-street proportion refers to the relationship between the height of buildings on each side of the street, to the width between those buildings. Ideal proportions create a public realm that is pleasant for both the street's residents and passers-by. In essence, this means thinking of the street and sidewalk as a potential "outdoor room." These are the kinds of outdoor spaces humans tend to most enjoy being in and walking through. Through setbacks, appropriate heights, and landscaping, small lot developments can help contribute to the creation of these outdoor rooms.



With a height of 41 feet, the small lot development creates a height-width ratio of approximately 1:3. While this ratio is sufficient for creating the semblance of an outdoor room, the street could benefit from landscape interventions within the public and private realms adjacent to the small lot development.



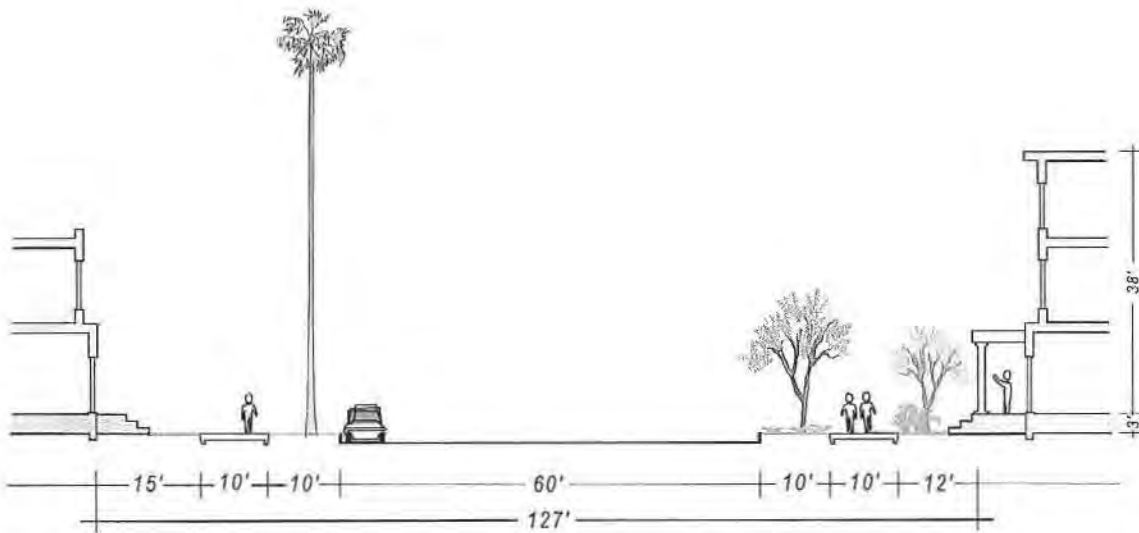
Many Los Angeles streets have skewed height-width ratios: low-rise buildings about narrow sidewalks and extremely wide streets. Shown at left: Hollywood Boulevard near the 101 Freeway, looking west.

While there is no magic number, the “walls,” or building heights, should extend upwards at least one-quarter the width of the “floor,” or the width between buildings on opposite sides of the street. Widths exceeding four times the height of buildings tend to eliminate any sense of enclosure for the pedestrian.

In some cases, neighborhood context may preclude increased building heights. In this case, one can add street trees within the public right-of-way, and trees and landscaping within the front yard area, to add further definition to the public realm. The effect is to create clearly defined, shady spaces



The simple addition of shade trees along the parkway (here, above right, Sycamores) can greatly enhance the sense of enclosure and comfort for pedestrians and residents.



Landscaping within the public, transitional, and private realms heightens the semblance of an outdoor room. Use canopy-creating shade trees in the public and private realms. Groundcovers and low-growing plants (not higher than 4') can further enhance the understory of the public and transitional realms without creating wall-like barriers.

BUILDING-TO-STREET PROPORTION GUIDELINES

- Attempt to achieve a building + grade height of at least $1/4$ the width of the space between buildings on opposite sides of the street.
- Define the public right of way through the planting of shade trees (see landscaping section for suggested species) and low-growing vegetation.
- Plant shade trees and ornamental plants within the private realm, to add increased definition and visual interest to both the public and private realms. However, avoid landscape schemes that call for 4'+ shrubs or other plants immediately adjacent to the sidewalk.



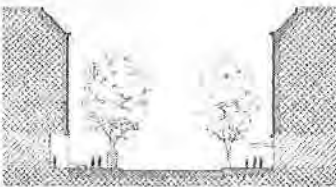
Normandie Boulevard, Koreatown
Street width: 50'
Width, building face to building face: 78'
Building heights: 65-80'
Height-width ratio: 1:1



Dunsmuir Avenue, Miracle Mile
Street width: 40'
Width, building face to building face: 86'
Building heights: 24'
Ratio: 1:3



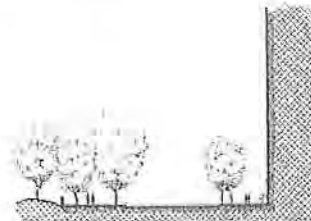
Larchmont Boulevard, Larchmont Village
Street width: 70'
Width, building face to building face: 101'
Building heights: 13-26'
Ratio: 1:4



Boulevard Saint-Michel, Paris
Street width: 50'
Width, building face to building face: 98'
Building heights: 80'
Height-width ratio: 1:1.2



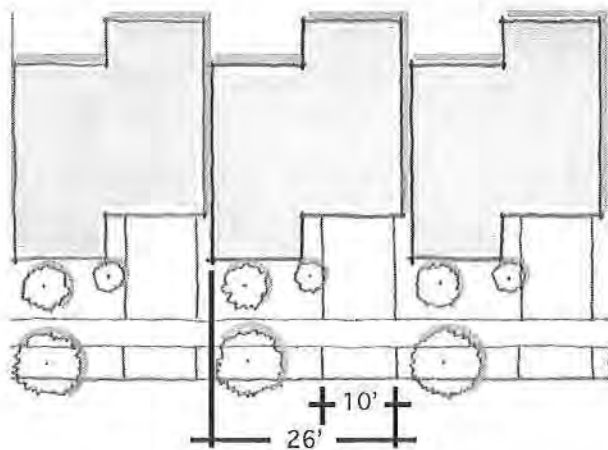
Via Cola di Rienzo, Rome
Street width: 50'
Width, building face to building face: 82'
Building heights: 50-70'
Ratio: 1:1.4



Fifth Avenue, New York
Street width: 45'
Width, building face to park edge: 100'
Building heights: 60-300+
Ratio: 1:2 to 3:1+

Street drawings and dimensions taken from Jacobs, Allan B. *Great Streets*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993.

3 | PARKING AND DRIVEWAYS



If an integral front driveway configuration is the only option for a small lot development, ensure that the building width allows for landscaping and a front entryway.



Avoid designs in which the garage dominates the dwelling's facade.

PARKING AND DRIVEWAYS

The design of small-lot developments must strike a particular spatial balance: simultaneously accommodate for the automobile but maintain high-quality public and private living environments. Often, small-lot configurations allow parking, driveways, and garages to dominate the landscape. These kinds of configurations both create conflicts for pedestrians and decrease the overall aesthetic quality of the development. Frequent curb cuts and driveways jeopardize pedestrian safety and eliminate space for street trees and on-street parking. Parking improperly placed at the front of townhouses can transform their facades into large, unsightly garages. Ideally, designs should locate parking behind dwellings, accessed from alleys where present. If driveways are necessary, designs should minimize their number.

3.1 NUMBER OF SPACES

The small lot ordinance requires the provision of two parking spaces per unit. Tandem parking is perfectly acceptable, space permitting. One space can be for a compact car.

For small lot developments under 10 units, guest parking is not required. For developments between 10 and 100 units, .25 spaces should be provided per unit. For developments larger than this, .5 spaces should be provided per unit.

3.2 DIMENSIONS

The small lot ordinance stipulates the following dimensions for parking spaces:

8'8" x 18' for standard-size cars;
7'6" x 15' for compact cars.

Driveway width depends on lot depth and building configuration. Integral front driveways should be 10'. In these configurations, the building width should adequately allow for integral front parking plus some yard and porch or landing space. Access driveways will vary in width depending on lot size, depth, and building height. Please consult the Fire Department.

3.3 DESIRABLE CONFIGURATIONS

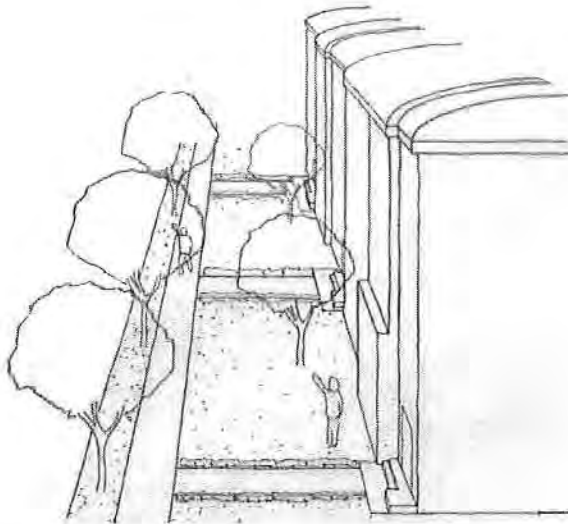
See section 2.2 for configurations.

3.4 DRIVEWAY MATERIALS

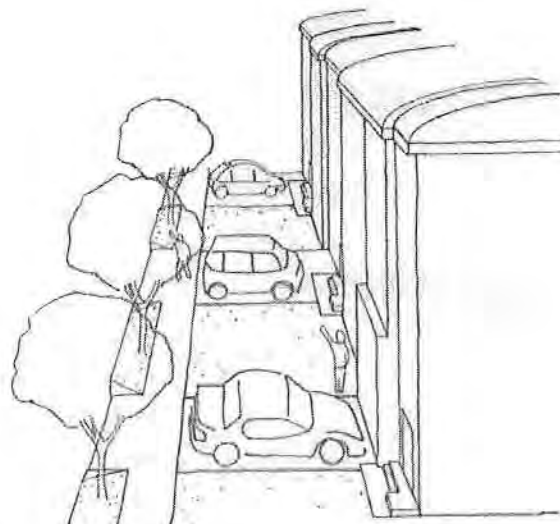
Currently semi-pervious driveway materials are not allowed under the code. However, one can use stamped concrete to create a more aesthetically pleasing alternative to the black asphalt driveway.

PARKING GUIDELINES

- Favor townhouse configurations that locate parking to the rear of dwellings
- Where available, use alleyways as access to off-street parking
- If integral front driveways must be used, the building width should allow for the driveway plus an ample amount of landscaping space and a front entryway, porch, or landing.



When driveways are located to the rear of dwellings, the streetscape can become a comfortable outdoor space for residents and passers-by.



Integral front driveway configurations tend to disrupt the continuity of the sidewalk and public realm, and eliminate space for street trees and on-street parking.

4 | BUILDING DESIGN AND MATERIALS

4.1 FENESTRATION

Effectively placed and articulated windows serve several practical and aesthetic functions: access to light and air; a transparent bridge between the public and private realms; rhythm and visual interest. Because Los Angeles architecture runs the gamut of styles, it is difficult to suggest one particular window style for townhouse developments. However, some general rules of thumb exist for ensuring that window placement and design enhance the overall quality of the project.

FENESTRATION GUIDELINES

- Placement should follow some consistent rhythm, to create visual clarity as well as to help avoid the creation of blank walls.
- Windows need not all be horizontally or vertically proportioned but rather their placement and orientation should take cues from the building's overall style and configuration.



Regardless of architectural style, window placement should follow some consistent rhythm. Note that rhythm is not necessarily synonymous with symmetry.



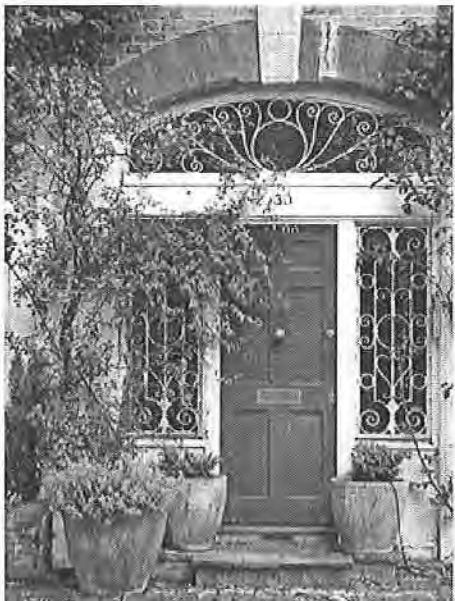


4.2 ARTICULATION OF ENTRYWAYS

Entryways serve as the gateway between the public and private realms. When designed well, and clearly defined, they simultaneously welcome visitors and clearly delineate the boundaries of the private realm. They may also offer habitable outdoor space in the form of a small front porch or patio.

ENTRYWAY GUIDELINES

- Entryways should be clearly identifiable. This can be achieved through stepping up the entryway, adding awnings, creating a landing area or front porch, and the addition of design details.
- Those townhouses fronting a street should always have their primary entryway accessible from the street.
- In the case of corner townhouses, the entryway should open onto the flanking street.
- Entryways should sit at a grade comparable to those of the surrounding structures but should never tower above the street.
- Garages should not take the place of the main entryway.



4.3 BUILDING MATERIALS

Because Los Angeles architecture varies in style – oftentimes within neighborhoods – these guidelines do not prescribe particular building materials. However, neighborhood context and the surrounding structures should inform one's choice of materials. Generally, one should choose durable, high-quality materials, considering how the materials will effect the overall look and feel of the small lot development

4.4 ROOF LINES

Roof lines should offer some variation in form, both vertically and horizontally. However, less is often more. While townhouses should exhibit some individuality, excessively varied and multi-pitched and gabled roofs tend to create a visual chaos that is undesirable and unnecessary. The key is to consider the effect the building's design elements (i.e. height and massing, entryways, balconies, roof lines) will have on the overall look and form of the dwelling.



Excessively varied and multi-pitched and gabled roofs risk creating a visual chaos.



Roof lines can create subtle variations in form while still allowing room for individuality.

LANDSCAPING AND SMALL LOTS

Two types of landscape areas exist when designing small lots: those adjacent to the public right of way, and those located within the site. Each fulfills a dual but somewhat separate role. Those adjacent to the public right of way are not simply assets to their owners, but also to the neighborhood, the public realm, and to passers-by. These landscapes help to create a sort of outdoor living room. Those landscapes located within the site are assets not simply to the residents of the small-lot development, but also to the individual owners of that landscape. They provide much-needed private outdoor space and some territory to treat as their own.

5.1 LANDSCAPING ADJACENT TO THE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY

Front yard space serves a dual function, and thus deserves particular attention. It acts as both habitable outdoor space for its owners, and as a proverbial shared living room of the neighborhood. That is, while strangers may not walk into the space, the yard is still a visual amenity to the neighborhood and passers-by. Additionally, it serves as a semi-transparent bridge between the private interior of the townhouse, and the public realm of the sidewalk and street.

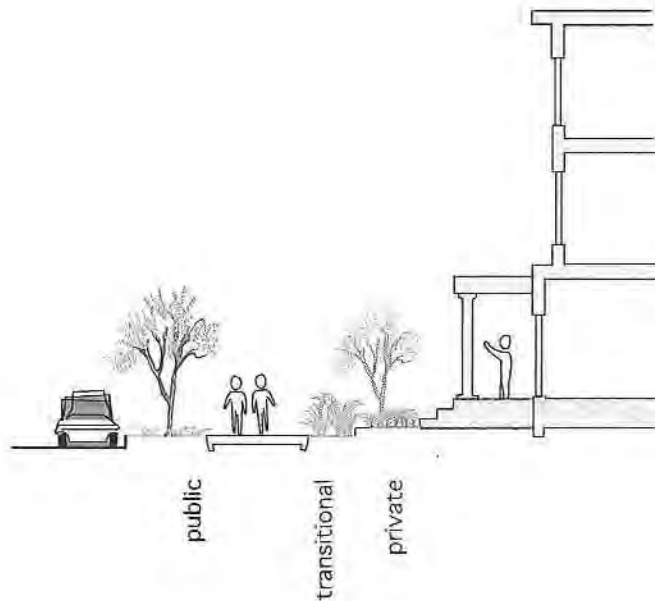
Typical but inappropriate landscaping comes in the form of turf grass along the parkway and no street trees; 7'-tall shrubs or fencing in the transitional zone, or just turf grass; and turf grass in the private realm, with a few shrubs abutting the building. The effect is a bland environment that offers little visual interest, but that requires much water to maintain. This kind of landscaping views the space as an afterthought.



Transitional planting of Senecio (ground cover), Silver Jade (foreground), Fox Tail Agave (center), Toothless Sotol (upper), and olive trees.



This landscape of turf grass and few trees is visually bland, requires extensive irrigation, and fails to enhance or define both the public and private outdoor realms.



Subtle variations in grade and drought-tolerant plant materials gracefully define transitions between the public and private realms.

A better approach is to view the landscape as three interlocking but separate zones: the public realm (the street, parkway, and sidewalk); the transitional zone near the lot line; and the private realm beyond the lot line. When landscaping for these zones, a general rule of thumb is to strike a balance between privacy and transparency, visual interest and order. One can delineate the three zones through subtle but defined grade separations, which step up to the private realm of the home. Within each zone one can plant a different set of plant materials, to add further definition. The addition of shade trees, both within the public and private realms, can complete the outdoor room.

This approach accomplishes several goals:

- Clearly delineates zones without creating walls
- Maintains visual interest through variations in plant materials, grades, and limited hardscape
- Minimizes water consumption and maximizes contributions to local flora and fauna
- Enhances the living environment of both the public and private realms

LANDSCAPING AND PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY GUIDELINES

- Use a range of low-water and drought-tolerant plant materials to provide visual interest.
- Employ subtle variations in grade to delineate transitions. Avoid the use of tall fencing (over 4') and shrubbery immediately adjacent to the sidewalk.
- Avoid water-thirsty turf grass. Use low-water and drought-tolerant ground covers instead (see suggested species list).
- Plant shade trees within the public realm, ideally spaced between 15' and 20' apart.

5.2 LANDSCAPING WITHIN THE SITE

Whenever possible, small lot designs should designate some fully private outdoor space for each dwelling. This can take the form of small interior yards, balconies, and roof decks. For these spaces, the emphasis should be placed on flexibility, rather than a sense of completion. For yard space, plant materials need not be too varied, so that residents may easily modify them to make them their own. For balconies and roof decks, size should be generous enough to create usable spaces.

5.3 PLANT MATERIALS

Ultimately the landscape should in some way enhance the natural environment of the neighborhood. Additionally it should be relatively low-maintenance. Drought-tolerant and native species satisfy both of these criteria. Requiring little maintenance once established, these kinds of plants can create visually appealing and ecologically sound landscapes. The following website offers suggested species, as well as sample landscapes to show possible groupings of plants: www.bewaterwise.com/Gardensoft/garden_gallery.aspx.

PLANTING GUIDELINES

- Apply mulch in between and around plants, both to conserve moisture and to eliminate bare earth, which can look unsightly and give the landscape a barren feel.
- Use low-water ground covers instead of high-water turf grass. However, avoid invasive ground covers such as English Ivy and Ice Plant. See above website for suggested species.
- Plant in groupings according to water needs.
- Maximize soft landscaping
- Incorporate existing natural features and topography



Groundcovers of Shrimp Pink Aloe and Senecio enhance and define the public realm without creating walls or barriers.



A boulevard planting of Deer Grass, Fescue, and low-water shade trees.



Narrow sideyards can pose problems of privacy and often fail to provide adequate access to air, light, and ventilation.

6.1 PRIVACY

With small lot developments come issues of privacy – not only for residents of the new townhouses, but also for those of neighboring properties. Improperly designed developments create situations in which balconies overlook neighboring yards or face other balconies, and windows face directly onto neighboring windows. Small lot designs should maximize access to private outdoor space, light, and views, while ensuring an adequate level of privacy of all residents. This will require particular attention to the orientation and spatial form of the development, distances between walls, and the location of windows and balconies.

PRIVACY GUIDELINES

- Windows and balconies should not face or overlook each other.
- When possible, minimize the number of windows overlooking into neighboring interior private yards. Otherwise use translucent glass and/or screen the windows with landscaping.

6.2 AIR, LIGHT, AND VENTILATION

The small lot ordinance minimizes the size of side, rear, and front yards in order to make townhouse construction feasible. While allowing for increased density, the reductions make providing access to air, light, and ventilation more complicated. Thus, architects and builders must take full advantage of three-dimensional space to create environments that are livable. Key criteria for natural light and ventilation are that the building's orientation and configuration, and the placement of windows allow for:

- daylight to reach all living space for part of the day, to the extent possible;
- adequate cross ventilation from cross breezes when windows are open.

Certain configurations lend themselves better than others to meeting these criteria. In general, one should avoid configurations that rely on narrow sideyards (less than 6 feet from building

face to building face) for access to air and light. Look to provide courts, niches, alcoves and other spaces to allow for access to air, light, and ventilation.

6.3 SERVICES

With small lot developments come a concentration of service and utility facilities – garbage storage, vents, meters and transformers. To minimize impact on adjacent dwellings and the surrounding neighborhood, small lot designs should attempt to locate these facilities in areas that are unobtrusive, and in ways that integrate them into the surroundings. Ideally, locations for service should be consolidated.

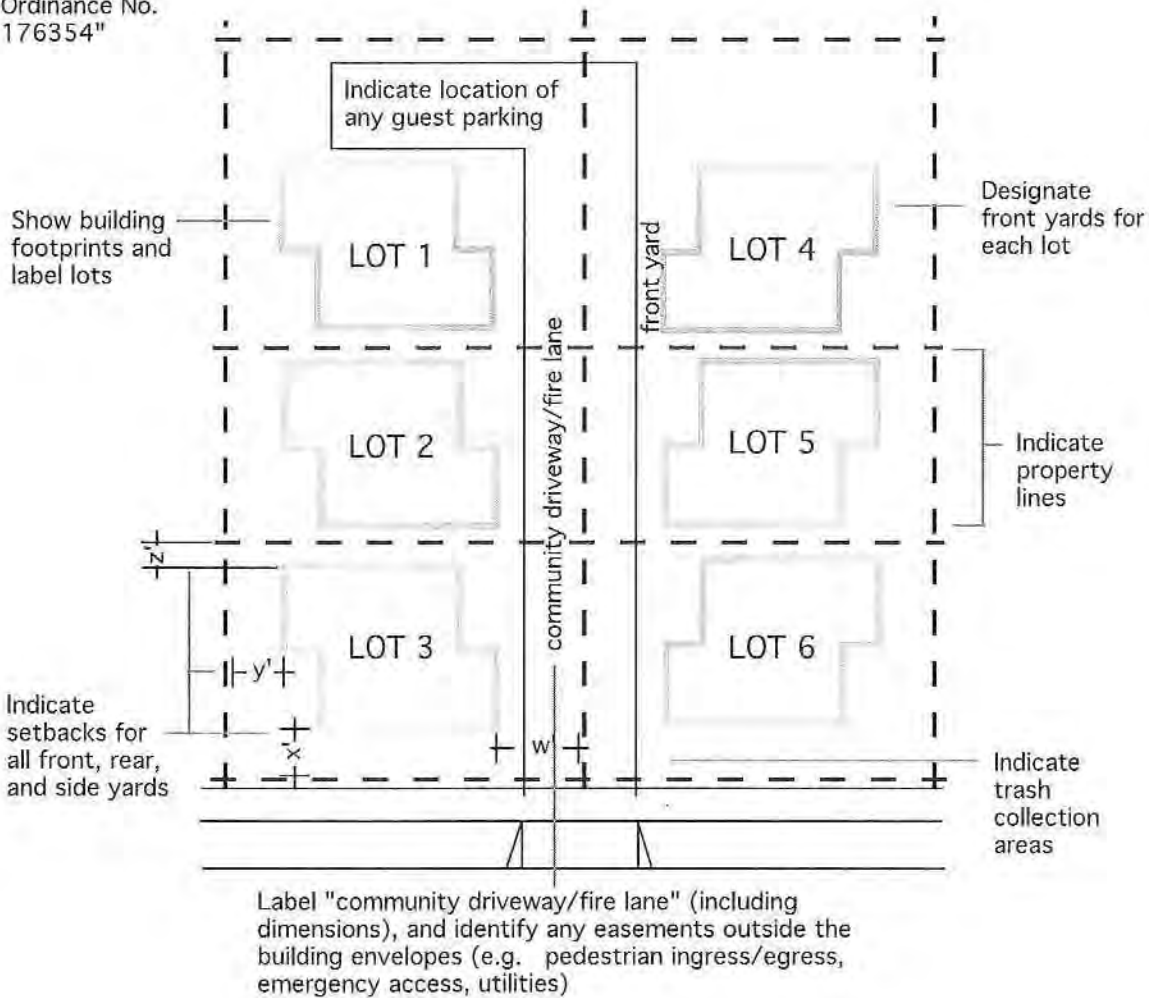
SERVICE GUIDELINES

- Whenever possible, consolidate servicing areas (i.e. trash) where they are easily accessible but do not adversely impact adjacent residences
- Screen trash pickup areas with landscaping so that they blend into the surroundings as much as possible
- Locate transformers, utility meters and HVAC equipment to the rear of dwellings whenever possible. If this is not possible, ensure that they are not visible from the public right of way.

A | APPENDIX: SAMPLE SMALL LOT TRACT MAP

VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT MAP for SMALL LOT SUBDIVISION PURPOSES¹

Include in Notes
Section:
"Note: Small
Lot Single Family
Subdivision in
the ___ Zone,
pursuant to
Ordinance No.
176354"



1. All other information required by Sec. 17.00 for filing is also required but is not shown in this example.

Google

Get Google Maps on your phone

Text the word "GMAPS" to 466453



Small Lot Subdivisions

Unlisted · 2 Collaborators · 3 views

Created on Nov 13 · By Alan · Updated < 1 minute ago



Artis

2400 Allesandro St, Los Angeles, CA 90039

15 homes

<http://www.planethomeliving.com/>



Atwater Crossing Homes

3249 Casitas Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90039

27 homes

<http://www.atwatercrossinghomes.com/>



Atwater Mews

4254 - 4300 Perlita Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90039

23 homes

<http://www.thegreenmews.com/>



Auburn 7

2746 Auburn St, Los Angeles, CA 90039

7 homes

<http://www.dwell.com/articles/Lucky-7.html>



Blackbirds

2040 Vestal Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90026

18 homes

<http://la.curbed.com/tags/blackbirds>



Buzz Court

2844 Rowena Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90039

6 homes

<http://cargocollective.com/heyday/>



Douglas

7 homes

<http://www.planethomeliving.com/>



Edgecliffe Terrace

1372 Edgecliffe Dr, Los Angeles, CA 90026

4 homes

<http://www.deasypenner.com/>

<http://lapropertyolutions.com/>



The Gatsby

1235 Wilcox Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90038

34 homes

<http://www.thegatsbyhollywood.com/>



Maltman Bungalows

918 Maltman Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90026

17 homes

<http://maltmanbungalows.com>



Montana

10 homes

<http://www.planethomeliving.com/>



Morra

1516 Echo Park Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90026

3 homes

<http://www.planethomeliving.com/>



Mosaic

5036 Ellenwood Dr, Los Angeles, CA

<http://www.pulte.com/communities/ca/eagle-rock/mosaic/102413/index1.aspx>



Rock Row

1546 Yosemite Dr, Los Angeles, CA 90041

15 homes

<http://www.leangreenlivingmachine.com/>



viVe Los Feliz

3341 Rowena Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90027

6 homes

<http://vivelosfeliz.com/>

Draft Glendale Municipal Code Changes to Implement a Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance

Zoning Code

Amendments for Multi-Family Zones

1. Eliminate setback averaging, minimum front setback 15 feet with 5 foot interior setbacks
2. Keep the base density and height requirements as they currently exist.
3. Eliminate common open space requirements, but increase private open space standards

Create Small Lot Subdivision Zoning Standards

1. Eliminate guest parking standards
2. Permit tandem parking for small lot subdivision developments
3. Prohibit subterranean parking for small lot subdivision developments
4. Permit roof decks

Design Review

1. Provide a process for small lot subdivision review

Definitions

1. Change "lot" definition to allow access by easement.
2. Add a definition for small lot development

Subdivision Code

1. Add a new section for small lot subdivision
2. Change definitions of "lot" to allow access by easement.
3. Allow an access easement to be sufficient lot access for subdivision purposes and provide such on the map.
4. Review and modify subdivision improvement standards for small lot subdivisions with Engineering and Building and Safety.
5. Modify the parking requirements for condominium subdivisions to match zoning code parking.
6. Clarify tentative tract map and tentative parcel map requirements for small lot subdivisions.

Comprehensive Design Guidelines

1. Develop small lot design guidelines and process for review

Building Code, Fire Code, Utility Requirements- TBD if directed by Council to implement

Dated November 20, 2012

Small Lot Subdivision Initiation

December 11, 2012 City Council



What Are Small Lots?

- Los Angeles Small Lots 2004
- Infill Multi-Family Zones
- Adaptable to Site Constraints
- Town House/Row House-style
- Single family with small or no yards



What Does Small Lot Development Look Like?



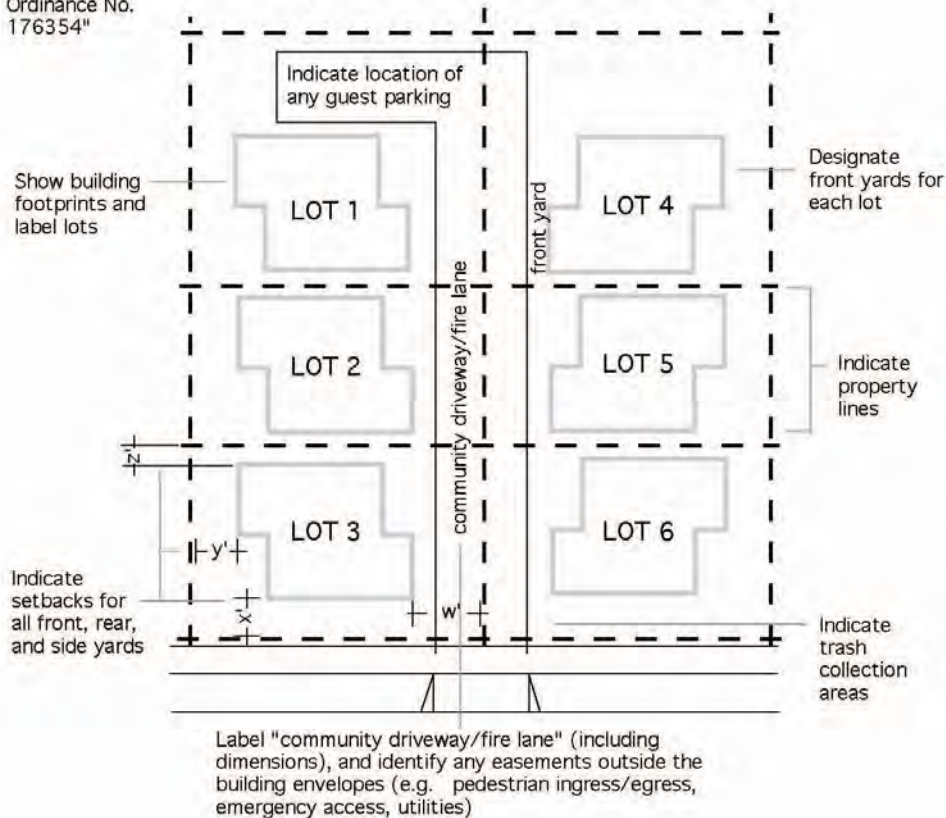
Separate Lots, Separate Structures



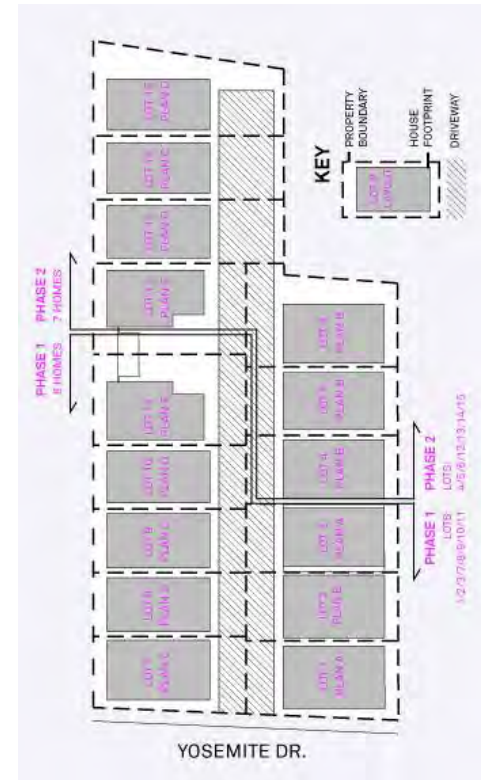
Small Lot Maps

Include in Notes
Section:
"Note: Small
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the __ Zone,
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Ordinance No.
176354"

VESTING TENTATIVE
TRACT MAP for SMALL LOT
SUBDIVISION PURPOSES¹

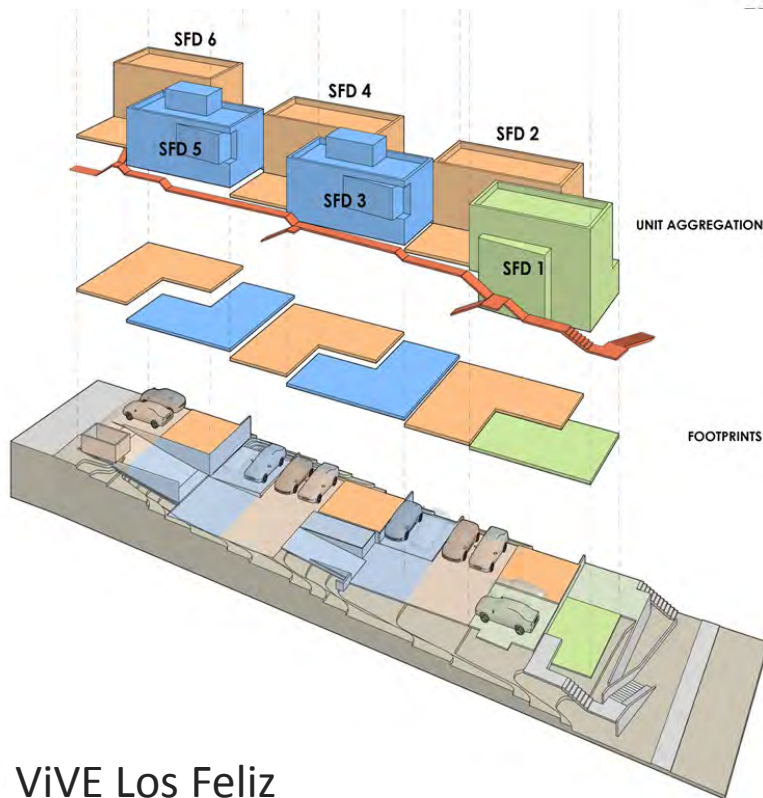


Buzz Court

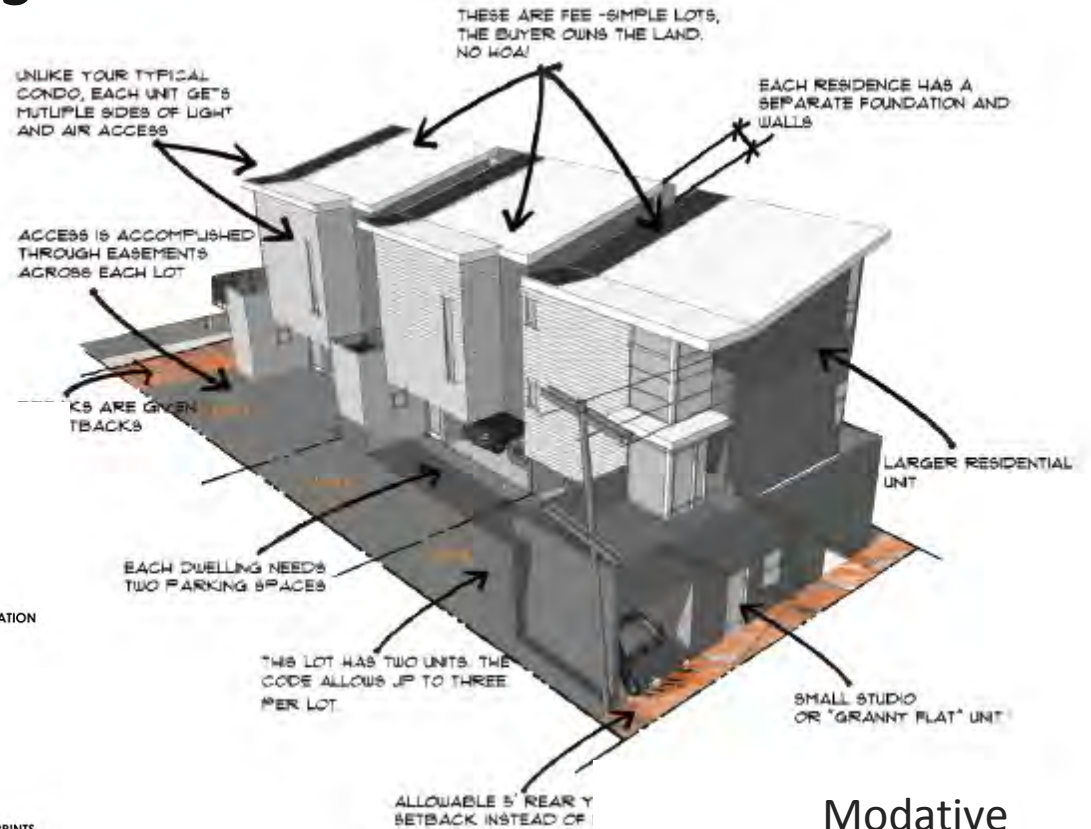


Rock Row

Small Lot Innovations



ViVE Los Feliz



Modative

Advantages of Small Lots

- Land, Not Air Space
- No Changes to Zoning Density
- Homeownership in Multi-family Areas
- Adaptable to Site Constraints
- Opportunities for Private Investment
- Workforce Housing (Studios, Arts)
- Adds Housing Choice
- Construction Financing Easier
- Potential for Historic Preservation

Preservation Tool for Historic Bungalow Courts



Proven Market Success



Buzz Court – Sold out in One Weekend

Disadvantages of Small Lots

- More Building, Less Open Space
- Easements, not Frontage
- No Guest Parking
- Less Density than Zoning Permissions
- Residents Need Cooperation



Multi-Family Infill

	R3050	R2250	R1650	R1250
Lots Under Density	372	471	238	165
Potential Additional DUs	437	982	755	688

From Glendale's 2009 Housing Element

Initiation Recommended

- Create Small Lot Ordinance
- Create Small Lot Design Guidelines
- Zoning & Subdivision Modification
- Establish Review Process to Coordinate Subdivision with other Codes

